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The Renaissance

Gender Roles

The renaissance period following the Middle Ages was a time of rebirth. Ideas and beliefs had changed in this period, moving away from the church and into a time of art, philosophy wonder. At this time cultural expansion was happening, social norms were expanding as civilization grew. A change was happening to people and their lifestyles. As religion did not have an impact on people at this time as the church lost power and wealth in this new movement. Women played a large role in humanism and also a small role in helping build up the renaissance civilization.

Women in the renaissance had a standpoint, even though they could not have a lot of power they were not going to stand by as decorations. Once again we see women live life in the shadow of the man. They were placed in arrangement marriages, dowry to purchase a good marriage. Marriages were arranged for business reasons and not much for the love. Women were a man's prize to increase his social statutes, they were treated as accessories in public. As the renaissance period took place women played a minimum role. There were two cultures between women of elite recognition and those of popular. The male norms were considered popular dorms, female culture was evaluated against the male norms. The role of women in the popular culture was problematic. Sharing and understanding a system within which people their lives.

As the female culture could be analyzed in different senses there were a few variables in their activities that would overcome social barriers helping women against the male sex. Women would share different thoughts and ideas. These things were what separated man from the females. Sewing played a big role on women life in this period, needlework was called work and all women did this. The women who worked in knitting were considered ordinary women they also did plain sewing compare to the wealthier women who did embroidery. This was cultural traditions for this social groups based on their primary group. Elite women had a rich variety of writing compared to that of the ordinary women. We can see the difference between the social status class of women in a much greater light as social statutes played a minor role in earlier culture. Even though the elite man had dominance in the culture as women who held a hegemonic power (elite women) among their own was limited. Women's knowledge came from books and experiences. Women with knowledge were the once of the center of the female world like that of a midwife. All women shared the experience of maternity.

Women who were educated were usually (typically) came from rich families (élite), their education was based on literature. These women had the access to the popular culture as they had the elite culture, unlike the ordinary women who only had the access to the popular culture. The popular culture (common) was misogynistic giving women hostility, women participated in this oral culture. Women, works, and styles were as men, they told jokes and told stories of women too. Having the idea that women were house wife's and belonged at home, just as the man they claimed for public space for themselves. This lead to women applying the idea that if they belonged at home then at home they would have their female place.

Gender space between man and female was large as if they were both separated cultures. Segregation was occurring at this time as well women were not allowed to certain places/locations of male facilities. Women created their own culture by taking control over their space. Holding gatherings to discuss their concerns in private places in which men were excluded. They thought that by having their gatherings they had some dominance over man authority.

Women gatherings were a place where they could discuss and speak of the things that they desired. But as we look into the French renaissance we can see how women in that region had more of a lenient restriction, especially since women could be part of the court and hold a somewhat powerful position in the court of Francis "The women most closely associated with Francis were crucial in defining his reign and advancing the new culture of the court and thus in formulating his legacy"(Kathleen Wellman).Women were the center of his court, to him women were not decorations but intellectual individuals of power and influence. They were like the structure that shaped France serving as political actors and diplomats. Moreover, the more women gather to talk about their concerns the fewer need women had to write it down. Women shared poetry, some poetry of this time showed sexuality from women to women. All female culture was free to converse with each other this was a great way to find things out. Mistresses were a big thing in this period, even though this is different, mistresses and the wife got along they would use this gathering as a way to discover more in-depth information about their husbands. As the man could not know of the things that they discussed in their own space. But most importantly this time was used to gossip which was good in cases of crime. Speech between women exposed the ideas of society and violations. Women were the deviation of the norm, the "other" compared to man. As if women were an error, the imperfection of male because of their body. With the more education learned men acknowledge the purpose of women. Sexual differences were abstractions of the body. The female body, like that of the male, with qualities that derive from their physical, make up. Man were characterized as active and women as passive; as the man was considered brave and strong, women being gentle, kind and timorous.

Women of elite class were employed as public office holders by the royal household, institutions. Female employment was based on social class. Depending on the job, there were different requirements; women were required to be married or single depending on the job. Women that were part of the royal household had duties and responsibilities. There was no special training for this offices performing important functions for the royal families. Away from the court, many public institutions

employed the popular women such as prison warders.

The renaissance period brought a lot of economic, cultural and social change that had a change in women's life. The inequalities between the sexes have always been a social problem in society. The man had dominance over women; they saw women as Eve (Adam and Eve) more sinful than man. These gave the man the impression that women were weak and deserved to suffer. This period helped limit the gap between man and female. Women who held a position in this period had an impact of society almost as great as men. Women were taught from a small age the basic household skills that one day they would be required to know as a wife and a mother. The elite women were placed oh high pedestals required to be of entertainment to their husbands guess. This is where the primary group learned the values of obedience, silence, and chastity. Women were to be seen but not heard. As marriage was that of a political game rather than the emotional attraction of love it was all a big business agreement between the two families, this was more common in the elite class. For the girls whose families could not purchase them, a good husband or a business agreement were sent to a monastery to become nuns. Since most of these business agreements of marriage were usually between a young girl and an older man, there was no loves that lead to problems. Women could not commit adultery for they could be punished with death, but men were allowed to have mistress. There were many expectations as wells as obligations in marriage one being having a child of the male gender. A woman's role in the renaissance was not to challenge the beliefs that had been set up for society for male dominance over the women. Women could not hold a spotlight in the arts, political and the philosophical wonders compared to that of man.